The Currency Problem

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HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor : K. G. MASHRUWALA

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HIS PERSEVERENCE

[Last week I gave a few extracts from M. D.'s Diary showing Gandhiji's insistence for spinning. This week, I give a few showing his perseverence in it. —K. G. M.]

10-5-'32

Bapu was full of enthusiasm as he had been able to spin upon the *Magan Charkha* with the right hand yesterday. Somehow the *charkha* would not work today. He had told Vallabhbhai in the morning, "It will work if your curse does not fall upon it!" He practised from 9 to 10 a. m., with the only result that some slivers were wasted. Vallabhbhai (sarcastically) remarked, "Ah! Is that your second bobbin after finishing the first?" It was no better in the afternoon. He tightened the cord on the drive-wheel, oiled the joints, and set right various points. I also tried my intelligence a little, but it would not work. Vallabhbhai after he awoke from his afternoon nap said, "You have spun too much today, now you must stop it." Bapu replied, "Yes, yes, I *have* spun. My caravan is not going to stop. After all, have I not taken seat with Samuel Hoare?" Vallabhbhai observed, "Yes, I see plenty of what you have spun, — on the ground below!" In the evening, even Vallabhbhai had not the heart to cut jokes. Bapu began to spin with his left hand. He must have worked at it for nearly five hours. He was quite exhausted in the evening and began to feel sleepy before 8 p. m., as his legs were being massaged. He got up and took to bed. As he was going to the bedstead, he remarked to Vallabhbhai, "You will see, that the *charkha* will work tomorrow. Faith is Might." Vallabhbhai said, "Here too, faith?" Bapu said, "Of course, of course, faith, there must be."

11-5-'32

Bapu succeeded better on the *charkha* today. He span 131 rounds in three hours. He told Vallabhbhai, "See the result today?" Vallabhbhai said, "Oh yes, there is plenty of it, on the floor!" Bapu replied, "Even that *sutar-feni** will stop. Will you then admit that I have done well?"

12-5-'32

This morning Bapu observed while spinning, "This is a great lesson." I said, "There is no need to say it. We are witnessing it." Bapu replied, "No, I do not say it in that sense. The fact that I take so much trouble at the age of 63 may seem to you a lesson. But what is an extremely fine lesson to me is that I feel so very much *interested* in this work at this age. The satisfaction of labour is something unique. The mother knows the satisfaction of labour at the time of delivery."

He had become quite fatigued after three hours of spinning. So, at night while his legs were being massaged, he said, "I shall now lie down." But after the massage was over, he was fresh again, and dictated a long letter. And it was not an ordinary one, but full of philosophical discussions.

(*Translated from Gujarati*) M. D.

* There is a pun on the word *sutar-feni*. Literally it means loosely wound thread; but it is the name of a well-known sweet so called because it looks so.

NOTES

The Qaid-e-Azam

The constant conflicting reports of Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's healthiness and illness did not allow one to get a correct idea of his real condition, and the news that he expired last night came too unexpectedly to me this morning to enable me to write about him in the current issue of the *Harijan*. Pakistan has lost her great founder and leader and his removal from her midst is a great calamity to the Government and people of that dominion. I hope they will bear it with becoming dignity and fortitude. As one who will always believe that India and Pakistan together form a single natural *mulk* (country) and a single nation no matter how many administrative divisions it might from time to time form and break, when I say that I extend my sympathies to my countrymen of Pakistan, let me not be misunderstood to mean Hindus and Sikhs of Pakistan, but to my Muslim countrymen of Pakistan also. My sympathies also to Begum Fatima Jinnah, the Qaid-e-Azam's sister.

Wardha, 12-9-48

Janab Shoebullah Khan

The tragic murder and other atrocities which are taking place every day in the Hyderabad State and in the bordering areas of Indian Provinces include among the victims several good workers also. It is extremely distressing to read the descriptions of the cruel manner in which many of them have been put to death. Janab Shoebullah Khan, the young editor of the *Imroz*, an Urdu daily published from Hyderabad, is one of these victims. His crime consisted in his condemnation of the misrule prevailing in the State, its communalism and fanaticism,

and the barbarity of the Razakars. He was an advocate of non-communalist democracy.

His brother-in-law, who assisted him in his work has also been seriously wounded and lies in a hospital. The Khansaheb was less than thirty at the time of his death. He leaves behind him his widow and two children, the youngest being born only four days after his death. In an outburst of fanatic politics, the death of a person at the hands of his own communalists for his courage of condemning madness and fury is a hopeful sign. When friendly relations are ultimately restored, as they must some day after the mists have rolled away, it is these victims who will be remembered with gratitude as the foundation-stones of a united nation. With heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved relations of the late Khansaheb, I cannot but also congratulate them for having had the privilege of being related to a national hero. His bereavement is a great loss to them as well as to the nation, his martyrdom is not.

Wardha, 10-9-'48

Floods and Famine

The news of heavy floods in the Punjab and U. P. is distressing. As if the destruction and havoc which men caused through the blindness born of their own wickedness, folly and ignorance had not been enough, equally blind and undiscerning Nature has visited them with further calamities by incessant rains and overflow of rivers and further threatens Western India with famine.

I hope people from all over India will render all such assistance as they can for relieving distress of the unhappy victims. It would be a dangerous Swaraj indeed if the people rested under a false sense of security or complacency that, now that there is a national government, people are relieved of rendering any humanitarian service or charity of their own initiative and sentiment and through unofficial social service organizations. Swaraj is to be taken advantage of for rendering these services more effectively than before.

Wardha, 10-9-'48 K. G. M.

Correction

The editor of the Bengali edition of the *Harijan* (*Harijanpatrika*) writes to correct that Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar never became a Christian. Readers are therefore requested to omit the word Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar from line sixty in the article *The Christians of Jashpur*.

In *Harijan* of September 5, 1948, on p. 230, column 2, in line 5 of para 3 for *expecting* read *expect* and in line 3 from the bottom for *further* read *farther*.

A BHANGI BY CHOICE

Dr. Deshraj Bhangi, B. Sc., Homeopath, E. Punjab, is regarded by society as a *khatri* by birth. He also considered himself to be so. But under the influence of Gandhiji's writings and the teachings of Swami Dayananda Saraswati, he gave up that notion. But though he had mentally relinquished his *khatri-ism*, he continued to put down 'Bat' as his family name, which by itself was indicative of his *khatri* caste. Once he read Gandhiji having said to someone to the effect that if a man considered himself as Gandhiji's follower, he ought to proclaim himself a *bhangi*. On that very day he changed his surname from 'Bat' to 'Bhangi'.

But thereafter he began to feel that it would be hypocricy on his part merely to call himself a *bhangi*, without becoming a scavenger in reality. So he began to work every morning for one hour with the *bhangis* of Lahore for a period of two years. This gave him some insight into the life of the *bhangis*, their wants and frustrations, helplessness and sorrows. Also, he got first-hand knowledge of scavenging work.

On account of his association with *bhangi* work his betrothal to a girl of his own caste was cancelled from her side. During this very period, Dr. Deshraj read a statement by Gandhiji that he would thereafter bless only such couples of whom one of the parties was a Harijan. This made the doctor to decide that he should marry only a Harijan girl, if one, who could fit in with his ideals in every respect, could be found. He understood that Gandhiji's expectation from such a marriage was that the couple would thereafter dedicate itself to the service of Harijans. Gandhiji's blessing was, indeed, a thing to be got at a very high cost. Ultimately, he was able to find a Harijan lady, who proved to be better than he had expected. Dr. Bhangi was not very hopeful of this result. For he thought that it was hardly possible that a cultured Harijan lady would consent to marry a Hindu belonging to a caste, which had, under a false claim of superiority, always ill-treated and boycotted the Harijans, and thereby proved its own moral degeneration and meanness of mind. So when he found that this young lady consented to marry him, he felt glad that he had been able to take his first step in the direction of Gandhiji's expectations. Dr. Bhangi says that his wife is a B. A., B. T., a good writer and an eloquent Hindi speaker. Besides, she knows painting and is very particular about cleanliness and purity of life. She wears pure khadi, believes in the equality of all and communal unity, and takes great interest in Harijan service.

The two have now engaged themselves in village service. They render free medical service to *bhangis* and also carry on educational activities among their children. Who can doubt that if Bapu had been alive, he would have conferred his love and blessings on this couple?

Wardha, 9-9-'48 K. G. MASHRUWALA

SHRI VINOBA AT RAJGHAT—VII

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND REMEDIES

Addressing the weekly prayer meeting at Rajghat, last Friday (3-9-1948), Shri Vinoba referred to the topic of the day, viz. the problem of high prices. He said that the Government had appointed a Committee which had made its suggestions. He had also offered a few suggestions and he wanted to speak about them that evening.

REVENUE IN KIND

One of Shri Vinoba's suggestions was that land revenue should be collected in kind. He was glad that only one member had opposed it on the ground that the proposal took the country back to mediaeval economy. It was not a cogent objection if it helped the solution. He was sure it did so. Moreover, there was a difference between his suggestion and the mediaeval system. He advocated a fixed quantity of the produce in place of a definite amount in money. The old system was to take a definite share of the actual produce, which would vary from year to year. His suggestion strengthened the Government and relieved the people. It was unbearable that the *kisan* should be required to sell his produce in order to pay his taxes. That what the *kisan* produced should be dishonoured and what he did not possess be demanded of him was an insult to him and had no justification whatsoever.

PROTECTION TO KHADDAR

Shri Vinoba's second suggestion was in respect of khaddar. It was very necessary that the Government should announce their policy of assistance in this connection. The producer of cotton should be offered all facilities for manufacturing the cloth. It would eliminate the shortage of cloth. The *kisan* did not understand why his leaders, who had always advocated khaddar, did not approach him now and he awaited the fulfilment of their promise.

The charkha must also be introduced in the school curriculum. The atmosphere of craft and industry which it would produce had its own place. Such an atmosphere was the need of the hour. Children who would master the art in the schools would carry the message to their parents, and a wave of craft and industry would spread over the whole country. Government should also purchase the extra yarn from the *kisans* and charge the textile mills the extra cost, for theirs was the responsibility. He was convinced that mill yarn had not the capacity to offer the necessary relief to the class of hand-loom weavers in the country, numbering not less than twenty lakhs.

NO MORE WOUNDING THE RICE

Referring to the food deficiency he condemned the wounding (polishing) of rice, and pointed out that as much as 12% of the nutritive value was lost in the process. It was a moral crime thus to destroy the nutritive value when the country was regularly importing food and floods and heavy rains damaged the crops. Apart from this the process caused a loss of 15 % in weight also. He was told that at present the rice was only partly pounded. But the figures showed that even the partial wounding caused a loss of at least 10 % in weight.

Shri Vinoba gave the instance of C. P. and Berar where, according to the figures he had obtained from Shri R. K. Patil, the Food Minister of the Province, rice amounting to three lakhs of tons was procured and thirty thousand tons were lost in the process of this semi-pounding. This waste ought to be immediately checked. Besides growing more food it was also necessary that what was produced should be properly utilized.

WASTE NO LAND

Shri Vinoba also asked why large areas of cultivable land were put under tobacco cultivation, when the country was so short of food and the slogan of "Grow More Food" was being run. He knew that some of the best land was under tobacco cultivation in Karnatak, Andhra and other places. The merchants were glad that the tobacco trade flourished and that the Englishman would purchase Indian tobacco in place of the American. But all this should be stopped and every inch of the land should be utilized for producing food.

NO MORE IMPORTS OF FOOD

Gandhiji had gone to the length of suggesting that vegetables should be grown instead of flowers in pot-gardening. Gandhiji's suggestion was not to be laughed away. There was a stimulus in it for strengthening the will-power of the masses.

Importation of food-stuffs had no justification whatsoever and a day might be fixed by which this would be put a stop to once for all, at any cost. If this was done and collective action taken accordingly, the strength of the nation would increase and the food problem would be solved.

ONE-EYED PEOPLE

The Committee of experts had recommended postponement of the prohibition programme. He was not astonished that experts should make such a suggestion, but he would maintain that the good of the country lay in refusing to accept that recommendation. Experts were like one-eyed people who could look at a problem from only one side. They did not consider problems in their totality. They would not remain experts if they did so. In examining their advice, it was necessary to look at things from all the sides.

REFUSE THEIR ADVICE

The question of prohibition was an important part of the Congress programme. It could not be put in cold storage without considerable loss not only to the prestige of the organization, but also to the morality of the nation. The freedom to carry on anti-drink agitation had been expressly safeguarded even in the Gandhi-Irwin pact. Women had shed their blood in the cause. The shastras spoke of five great sins. Drink was one of them, and the fifth sin consisted in giving co-operation to the remaining four. The nation must save itself from that sin. But, apart from sentiment, everyone knew how injurious the evil of drink was. Considering all that, Shri Vinoba hoped that action would not be taken on that one-sided suggestion.

(*Translated from Hindustani*) D. M.

HARIJAN

September 19 1948

THE CURRENCY PROBLEM

Inflation and high prices have been engaging the serious attention of the Government of India and the public. The Government of India invited conferences of industrialists, economists and experts to suggest a way out of the difficulties. They are no doubt intelligent, learned and capable men. They are also well posted with statistics and understand international trade and politics. But the facts are that hardly any one of those who have been called to advise is much the worse personally by reason of the evils he is asked to remedy. Several of them, indeed, have, so far, profited by what appears to the general public as calamities. Not only the great World War, but even the partitions, the great migrations, the Kashmir War, the threatened hostilities with the Nizam, the scarcity of food, sugar, milk, ghee, cloth, kerosene, wood, charcoal, houses, fodder, oil-cakes and a dozen other things (except perhaps, petrol for motor-cars) have hardly reduced their comforts or lowered their standard of life. Rationing has not seriously affected their pre-war mode of life. An order not to feed more than a handful of guests at the same party has not created a serious problem — social or economical — for them. Most of them have been in a position to circumvent all control restrictions with the aid of the plenty of currency they possess and are able to attract towards themselves. They can feed a few hundred guests without any rationed article whatever. Their approach to the problems is merely objective.

Subjectively, several of them are interested in things going on as they are. Howsoever honestly and sympathetically they might attempt to think, their instinct of self-preservation will not persuade them to regard any remedy as "a practical proposition", if it will subject their class to a considerable reduction of their gains and comforts.

The second fact is that it is the political, industrial and economic theories and policies of these political and industrial magnates themselves that have created the present mess. They still pin their faith in the same theories and policies, which have thrown the world into the present troubles. By its very nature, they cannot be expected to suggest the true remedies. A speculator who has brought his firm to the verge of bankruptcy and yet pins his faith in hedging contracts and speculative trading cannot rescue the firm out of the difficulty. For he follows the policy of the Gujarati proverb, "a losing gambler plays with double zeal." If he gets out of the muddle, it would be sheer accident and play of forces outside his ken and control.

The third fact is that whatever the university professors might say in their text-books on Economics, the ruling economic theory all over the world is still " the mercantile theory ". Currency, whether backed by gold, or silver, or some intangible credit, is not merely the standard of measurement of wealth, but continues to be regarded as wealth itself. Though by itself incapable of providing or producing any real need of life, it is invested with the power of producing interest, by a mere change in the place of depositing it. It is forgotten that payment of interest is reduction of either production of wealth or of necessaries. Mercantilism cannot think so deep.

The suggestions made by industrialists and economists, as far as can be judged from the reports appearing in the Press, suffer from the drawbacks mentioned above. For instance some of the suggestions are as follows:

1. Government must increase its revenue and reduce its expenditure. For this purpose, prohibition should be suspended or slowed down; expenditure on social, educational and welfare activities should be limited; expenditure for rehabilitation of refugees and Kashmir operations should not be met out of revenue expenditure, but from borrowings (i. e., should be thrown on the future generations).

2. Production should increase; and for this, Capital must be induced to give up her shyness by abolition of Capital Gains Tax, allowing the rate of dividends to go up to 6%, re-enunciating an assuring industrial policy, recalling savings made by farmers and factory workers, not entertaining any intention to reduce the value of the present currency, liberally importing main necessaries of life such as food-grains, kerosene, matches; also capital goods, steel, scarce minerals, and essential raw materials of industry:

3. No doubt, mention is made of encouraging agriculture. But in the background of the above, it would be surprising if it did not mean increase of industrial and commercial agriculture — i. e. money-crops, like tobacco, cotton, tea, coffee, sugar-cane etc.

4. It has been suggested that a standing advisory committee or committees of representatives of economists, businessmen and labour should be created to help the Government in implementing their policy. There is no mention of representatives of village or cottage or small industries, rural labourers and workers, farmers, cattle-breeders and consumers with limited and fixed incomes. The person whom the shoe of high price and inflation pinches is conspicuous by his omission:

5. There is a superstitious faith in the power of controls, penal laws, fixing of legal prices, rationing etc. — methods which have been tried and untried, with the uniform result that they have failed to bring relief to the real sufferer or perceptibly affect the profiteer or the black-marketeer.

With great deference to the learned economists, influential, experienced and talented men, and political leaders, I humbly submit that the various suggestions made by these bodies, even if honestly

and fully implemented, will not bring the desired relief to the nation, or lead it on to the path of prosperity. The way which they follow and show is the well-known road which ultimately leads to insolvency. It awaits the bankruptcy of one big country and a few big industrialists to bring about the ruin of several smaller ones. Their seeming prosperity is nothing but borrowing rupees five lakhs to pay off rupees one lakh in the hope that the new loan would bring more profits. It, of course, allows him to run his establishment for a time on a pleasant scale. Long association with particular channels of thinking and habits of doing things has incapacitated them from looking at the root of the evil and from taking the courage to do what is right, even when they realize its ultimate necessity. It reminds me of a businessman who was very honest, but brought up under the present business system. His affairs were getting complicated. Shri Jamnalal Bajaj and I clearly saw that the only thing that could save him was to pay up all the creditors (as he had sufficient assets), wind up the business, and make a new start in life on a smaller scale. But he could not muster up that courage, and tried to manage by involving himself into further entanglements. Fortunately for him Providence took mercy on him and a brief illness put an end to his worries. His children who were free from the traditional complex accepted Shri Jamnalal's advice, and withdrew from the business, paying up all the creditors and collecting what outstandings they could without recourse to litigation, and starting life in an humbler way.

What was true for him is true for the whole nation — nay the world. We have destroyed an immense amount of world's wealth in devastating wars. Not a pie of the huge amounts spent every day for twelve years or more in different parts of the world produced anything but evil. All that money did nothing except destroy cities, men, women, children, cattle, property and also itself. The war-mongering mentality still persists: both among the victors *inter se* as well as the vanquished. And this is sought to be maintained through sham money and extravagant uneconomic industrialism.

They have been all talking of increasing production But may I venture to ask, what is that they want to produce, for whom, and in what way? To take only a few instances, there is no dearth of sugar stocks in India. But an insufficient and inefficient system of transport will not make it available to the people. It is said that cloth is not sufficient; and yet large quantities are exported or smuggled outside the borders. It is said that the production of food must be encouraged; but what is visible is the encouragement to grow tea, or tobacco for the British smoker and the like.

True, that currency should not be lightly played with, so as to destroy people's confidence in it. But surely, you can find suitable alternatives for currency, so that there might be less necessity for printing new money, and the present paper currency might be encouraged to return to the treasury. The present currency has become bad money. Its return must be encouraged. It can be done by permitting more valuable alternative legal tenders. You can also recall the present currency by a new currency of a different type, and issued on a new principle. For instance, you might exchange all one hundred and ten rupee notes at par by a fresh issue bearing a new date of issue, and by legislating that these notes shall automatically be reduced by, say, one anna per rupee at the end of the year, in the hands of the bearer, but shall be exchanged at par if deposited in a bank during the last month of the year, and such reduction would be repeated at the end of each year. Thus a ten rupee note issued in 1949, would lose 10 annas in 1950 if still in circulation, but would fetch the full value and be paid with a new note if deposited in a bank before the end of the year. It would be further reduced by Re. 1-4-0 in 1951 and so on.

To sum up, the nation must wind up its present industrialism which thrives ultimately on wars, foreign trade at the expense of the needs of the nation, speculation, increase of luxuries and destructive weapons, and lavish way of living. It must not rest on augmentation of debts whether called national or private. "The capacity to borrow is the measure of credit" in its extreme application is the outlook of the ignorant peasant or the rash speculator and bankrupt trader, and never of a steady and honest businessman. Various countries have followed the same maxim, and gone on increasing the national debts, and not one of them has brought happiness and peace to even their own people, not to say the world. To the world, it has brought only imperialism and wars. Money, the most unproductive material in the world, is superstitiously believed to be the mother of all wealth. A yard is a measure of length and 5000 yards of cloth mean so much *cloth* and not so many *yard-sticks*. And a cloth merchant does not stock 5000 yard-sticks if he wants to deal in 5000 yards of cloth. But the possession of a field or house worth 5000 rupees is, by a strange superstition for currency, regarded as of less advantage than that of 5000 pieces of paper or coins called rupees.

Let the measure remain, but it should remain as such and not as the essence of wealth. It is by itself a barren thing, and its barrenness must not be artificially concealed. Payment of interest or dividend on money is the artificial concealment of its barrenness. It is neither economical nor moral.

Wardha, 8-9-'48 K. G. MASHRUWALA

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RE-JOINDER

[Shri Atul Chandra Ghosh of Purulia desires me to publish the following letter, so that the readers of the *Harijan* might know the other side of the Manbhum controversy through its own spokesman. I shall make my comments upon it in the next issue. — K. G. M.]

I have read your *Amends* in the *Harijan* of the 8th August 1948. In this article you have omitted to consider our side. It is not a matter of a particular circular only. The entire situation must be taken into consideration.

We did not give you any impression that the circular was issued by the Bihar Government. You somehow hurriedly mistook it. Sjt. Bibhutibabu sent you also a copy of the resolution and he is of the impression that, if not at the top of the copy of the resolution, in the letter addressed to you by him he apprised you of the real position of the resolution. But even if that impression is wrong, before any other person contradicting, I hastened to point out to you the errors that occurred in your article. You have not even mentioned it in your present article *Amends*. Though unwittingly, this omission has caused us to be looked upon as guilty of supplying you deliberately some motivated wrong impressions to be exposed only by contradiction from other quarters. We have also noted these two errors in our *Mukti* of 26th July last.

As to the 'plan and programme' in question I assert again that it was conceived and planned, and is being worked out by the local officials in collaboration with many anti-Congress and anti-social elements of the district, and the authenticity of which would unmistakably be substantiated by us. The 'plan and programme' is only a part of the whole picture. More harmful and objectionable activities than what have been undertaken in the 'plan and programme' have been and are being perpetrated in Manbhum to supplant Bengali by Hindi in order to prevent the linguistic principle being applicable to Manbhum. And the regrettable aspect of the picture is that all these activities including the purport of the 'plan and programme are being carried on with the help, direction and management from the Government, which we have realized and experienced in many ways and from many authentic facts. All these have been stated in my letter to you dated 13-7-'48 I am sorry that I should have to say in this way about those whom I cherish as my near colleagues and my own. But the situation in Manbhum has become so poisonous, so disorderly and the Congress work in the district has so obnoxiously been tried to be ruined, and the civil liberties and the fundamental rights of the people are being jeopardized that I feel it imperative to relate all these things to you. This is not a matter of setting the case for the first time. We have been inviting attention to all these untoward activities for the last four or five months, of many responsible persons including Dr. Rajendraprasad and Shri Shankarrao Deo and the Bihar Ministers. We requested the All India Congress Committee to investigate into, not only the allegations we made, but also into our stand and activities to ascertain whether they are vitiated by corruption and motivated by prejudicial feeling, or are based on just principles.

You do justice to your friend who has supplied you with a copy of the 'plan and programme' when you say that he is incapable of practising fraud upon you. But, I am afraid, you at the same time withdraw this confidence of yours in him when you decide yourself that you have been deceived by his being injudiciously misguided by others, without giving him a chance to prove his allegations. Without ascertaining from him his reaction to the contradictions, you proceed to make amends, to express regret and to cast reflections on him. We did not want that you should believe us on the face of what we said. You could have ventilated our allegations, without any commital on your part, for an investigation by proper authorities. Now you conclude your decision in the reverse on the face of one-sided contradiction, which I did not expect from you. Even after the publication of your article *Unclean Means* I wrote to you a letter apprising you of all the happenings in the district and endorsing all what the Secretary wrote in his letter enclosing copy of the 'plan and programme'. You did not take into consideration what we wrote to you in your re-discussing the matter. I wish you would have given my assertions even the benefit of doubt. In your reply dated 16-7-48 to my letter pointing out that the resolution was not passed, you wrote, "This mistake may have to be rectified. But it does not modify the fundamental position." But in your present article you do not even make any mention of that view of yours. You have mentioned in your article of your being supplied with reports of violent and inflammatory agitation on the part of pro-Bengal propagandists in Manbhum and you say that you have no reasons to disbelieve them. I being on the spot have no such information. Rather I have had ample proofs that there have been conspiracies to make out such false cases. I do not know what are your reasons to believe those allegations. I would surely expect that anybody's belief should be based on proofs convincing to him and not on mere receipt of complaints. But I would like to invite anybody to come and test for himself what I have said. My humble opinion is that no charges or counter-charges should be taken to be true unless they are substantiated by facts and findings of an impartial investigation.

You have reproduced the letter of the Education Minister of Bihar in this issue of the *Harijan*. He has adumbrated in this letter the Bihar Government's policy and activities regarding education. All that I am constrained to say of them is that all his defence on their part and accusations made against us would be proved just the reverse on enquiry, and they can be substantiated by us with documentary and factual proofs. Specially in the field of education in Manbhum a havoc has been created to jeopardize the people's mother-tongue, and the responsibility of which wholly goes to the Ministry. He has defended his officers also in this letter as to their being innocent of having adopted any unclean means of any kind. For the last several

months we have been raising cries about the misdeeds of the officers of the district. Nobody of the Ministry cared to come to the district to investigate into these allegations though repeatedly requested to do so. Anybody who defends an accused without having gone through any investigation betrays only his partiality and prejudice. Now after so many months, on the 9th July last the Prime Minister and the Revenue Minister intimated to us that they were willing to discuss all our allegations including those against the local officers, and that if they be found to be true they would remedy them. While negotiations for the discussion were going on, would any Minister of that Ministry be considered to have done his part rightly if he unreservedly advocated for those officers? Even the Press Communique of the Bihar Government issued on 28-7-'48 did not deny the implication of the local officers with the 'plan' and programme'. After a long interval from the date of publication of the 'plan and programme' in the *Mukti* the Revenue Minister has intimated to you that no such body as 'Joint Committee' exists as a matter of fact, *according to the information of the Government*. This reply is evasive and, I think, a shield for their officers. The Government have utilized the governmental information. But there is our information. The Government would have been justified to say anything in the matter, if they did it after an investigation into the allegations made. But they could not even now proceed to enquire into the matter, or contradict in the Press the allegations against the local officers, or, to quote your words, "to justify themselves by asking the officers to stop the activities," as you wrote in your letter of 16-7-'48 to me. You have appreciated the educational policy and principle of the Bihar Ministry as explained by the Educational Minister. But I think even the expressed policy of theirs is not in accordance with the All India decisions as stated by Moulana Azad. However, I do not want to go into details about it; I would like to discuss it if called upon to do. The Minister has tried to show that the majority of the people of the district speak Hindi, or, one or other of the tribal languages, mostly Santali; and he assumed that probably you are aware of it. I do not know what your information about it is. Your silence on this point, however, may be taken by the public as your endorsement of the statement of the writer. But the actual facts, the census figures, traditional documents and every other proof speak otherwise than what the writer says. As regards his observation that Bengali had been imposed upon the people of Manbhum of a different tongue it is as fantastical as anything. The majority of the people have been carrying the tradition of Bengali generation after generation, which the very people would bear testimony to. Even the Bihar Government's expressed policy regarding education in Manbhum stands unjustified when the baselessness of the Education Minister's contention is understood. If his contention be found baseless, will not even their declared policy and activities stand as an imposition on the people of Manbhum, not to speak of all undesirable means to strangulate Bengali? Would they, in that eventuality, not be guilty of the same charge they level at others? I do not want to establish truth by words. Facts will prove for themselves. I do not say all these things to plead for Bengali or Bengali's claims. As the development and the future of a people depend largely upon their language, I think it to be my duty to save the mother-tongue of the people of the district ande their rights regarding it.

The way in which you have commented on and reproduced the article of the Education Minister of Bihar without any comment even on the known controvertial matters that are in his article may be taken as your endorsement of the article *in toto*. As for example, his observation that Hindi is likely to be accepted as the State language by the Central Government has not attracted your attention. The unjust imposition of Hindi is finding an excuse in the name of Rashtrabhasha, which is amply evident in Manbhum. The propaganda that Hindi is going to be the Rashtrabhasha is going on in Manbhum as in other parts of the country by the people antagonistic to Hindustani.

There is an indication in the Minister's article that our unearthing of all these circulars etc. are connected with the move to amalgamate Manbhum with West Bengal. But wholly opposite is the case. The undesirable move to keep Manbhum anyhow in Bihar has found disparagement from all our unearthing of those circulars etc. Our stand all along has been that we should not be participant to any move for demand for any particular province, that the question should rest with the High Command to judge the principle and to do the needful. We have clearly stated our stand in our resolution in question, and also in a letter to Dr. Rajendraprasad which I have written to him in connection with his reply to Mr. Bagchi, Advocate, Calcutta. In these we have clearly stated our reasons for our stand. I hope these would come to the public in time. I would ask anyone to prove our complicity with any move for amalgamation. I definitely say that nobody can disprove our version about this stand, or to show any discrepency between our declarations and our actions. Moreover, I would say that there is no movement altogether in Manbhum for amalgamation. But if pious paper resolutions and statements may be considered as movements, then one or two resolutions were taken by the Purulia Bengali Association, the Bar Association and the public, and even these took place about a year ago. A memorandum was also submitted by the Purulia Bengali Association to Shri Shankarrao Deo when he came here in the June last.

We have been wrongly accused by the Minister of not being in favour of the Adivasis and Hindi-speaking people getting education through their mother-tongue. We sincerely want that all the rights and facilities which are beneficial to the respective people must be given to them. The people's wish, the people's right has never been denied by us. What we object to is the violation

of the declared policy; the denial of education in the mother-tongue, the motivated arrangement to foist Hindi on the Adivasis by supplanting their own agelong cultural language,— Bengali —, which is their only medium of instruction, in the name of giving instruction in their mother-tongue, and the thwarting of the wish of the people regarding the primary education of their boys. That the allegations about all these objectionable methods and activities are not faked and fabricated but are real would be proved even by the paper instructions of the Education Department of the Government of Bihar.

In order to do justice to us and that our position may be clearly understood by the public, I would request you to publish my letter, though a bit lengthy, in your *Harijan* and oblige.

Shilpashram, Purulia, 13-8-'48

ATUL CHANDRA GHOSH

WHY TRACTORS THEN?

Attempts are being made to bring our country into line with the wealthiest countries of the world. At present it is one of the poorest. To achieve this end people feel that they should use the same methods which the wealthier ones have adopted. For quick production speedy machines are sought to be used. This increase in the rapidity of production, with the cry of 'Produce or Perish' seems to have shut the eyes of some of us from the basic facts obtaining in our country. Here we hope to deal only with one item — the introduction of tractors in rural India which may well typify the problem.

All automatic machines require some fuel — wood, charcoal, coal, electricity, or petroleum. Tractors need petroleum products and the more tractors we introduce the more of petroleum shall we require. A glance at the figures given below will show that India does not produce even 1/100th of its requirements of petroleum products today. The latest figures of mineral oil annual output of Indian oil fields is 820,000,000 gallons of which only 7% can be used as internal combustion fuel. The following are the latest available figures of import (during the nine months of 1946, April to December):

Kerosene oil	117,936,989,000	gallons
Diesel oil	231,060,900	,,
Petrol	102,475,013	,,
Total Import	118,270,524,913	,,

It is clear that we depend for our petroleum products practically on imports only. These imports cannot be increased unless we too have a share in the control of the world oil fields. This very year India's quota of petrol has suffered by a 10% cut. Even our own oil wells are with British licensees. Petroleum is and has always been the bone of contention between the industrialized countries whom we aspire to follow. The Indonesian tangle is due to U.K.-Holland partnership in all the oil fields of the world. The Iraq-Arab subordination, the bloody fight in the Middle West in the vicinity of Arab and Persian oil fields are all influenced by petroleum politics. All these big bosses must conserve this all important source of motive power for the next conflagration. Apart from this fact the annual consumption of these countries is steadily increasing. U. S. A.'s consumption of oil has almost doubled (75% higher) from its pre-war level. In U. K. too it has gone one and half times up.

These oil wells are not like water wells which never exhaust. Water wells have a cycle. The water is baled out. It evaporates and rains come down and the surface water trickles back to the bowels of the earth. No such cycle exists in the case of petroleum. Crude petroleum is a product which had taken Nature billions of years to prepare. Once it is burnt up it goes into the air and never returns. The sources are being rapidly exhausted. The most optimistic estimate puts it that they will not last more than two decades. Even if we forget the share in the violence and the folly of short-range view-point, we face the problem of getting our present day needs of petrol fulfilled.

When we introduce tractors in our fields, we rely on petroleum products for our food — setting aside all the arguments about village economy, cattle wealth, labour utilization and the like. When it is clear that even the present day necessities of this article seem hard to be secured, will it not be wise to think twice before buying another mineral oil consuming machine?

If we make our agricultural economy depend purely on imported fuel, should a war break out, we shall face starvation, as extensive fields dependent on imported power will have to lie fallow. This will be like building a fort where there is no supply of water. Our economy will collapse the moment war drums begin beating even if we are not ourselves a party to the war.

Much is made about our power alcohol potentialities but it cannot mitigate the problem to any extent. It can effect an economy of only 25% in consumption of petrol by making admixture obligatory. As regards synthetic petrol, it is too early to say anything — the cost of production and availability of raw materials are yet to be investigated. Even its effectiveness as a substitute cannot be vouchsafed.

D. K. GUPTA

CONTENTS PAGE

HIS PERSEVERENCE ... M. D. 245
A BHANGI BY CHOICE ... K. G. MASHRUWALA 246
SHRI VINOBA AT RAJGHAT-VII ... D. M. 247
THE CURRENCY PROBLEM ... K. G. MASHRUWALA 248
RE-JOINDER ... ATUL CHANDRA GHOSH 250
WHY TRACTORS THEN? ... D. K. GUPTA 252
NOTES:
THE QAID-E-AZAM ... K. G. M. 245
JANAB SHOEBULLAH KHAN ... K. G. M. 245
FLOODS AND FAMINE ... K. G. M. 246
CORRECTION ... 246

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